

DEFENSE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH

Equal Opportunity Advisors' Perceptions of the Effect of Publicity on the Military Sexual Harassment Climate

by

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ABSTRACT

Although the Department of Defense (DoD) is considered a pioneer in fighting discrimination, sexual harassment became a highly visible issue in the 1980s and has continued into the new millennium. In order to combat sexual harassment, the military Services for more than 15 years have prohibited sexual harassment of military personnel. The Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) in the early 1980s developed training in the prevention of sexual harassment. As more units became gender-integrated, the Services offered training about gender and sexual harassment. In spite of the sensitivity training, sexual misconduct persists and can impact negatively on the mission.

When problems surface, especially in large public organizations such as the military, the press reports them. This research project examined newspaper coverage of sexual harassment in the military during 1996-2000. After opening with an overview of the sexual harassment situation in the military and discussing the role of the press, this paper presents newspaper coverage of key sexual harassment incidents. Presented next are findings from a pilot survey of equal opportunity advisors' perceptions of how such coverage could affect the military Services and their perceptions of some issues raised in the newspapers.

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The opinions expressed in this report are those of the author and should not be construed to represent the official position of DEOMI, the military services, or the Department of Defense.
